

I take what I can get (that's my only secret left)
Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/68501551) at <https://archiveofourown.org/works/68501551>.

Rating:

[Mature](#)

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Categories:

[F/F](#), [F/M](#)

Fandoms:

[Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D. \(TV\)](#), [Marvel Cinematic Universe](#)

Relationships:

[Leo Fitz/Jemma Simmons/Skye | Daisy Johnson, Hive/Skye | Daisy Johnson](#), very briefly but by God is it there

Characters:

[Jemma Simmons](#), [Leo Fitz](#), [Skye | Daisy Johnson](#), [Hive \(Marvel\)](#), [Elena "Yo-Yo" Rodriguez](#), [Alphonso "Mack" Mackenzie](#), [Phil Coulson](#), [Melinda May](#)

Additional Tags:

[Alternate Universe - Soulmates](#), [Angst](#), [Angst with a Happy Ending](#), [Hurt/Comfort](#), [not pre-canon despite what the summary may imply, well. kinda pre-canon. partially pre-canon.](#), [as always it is never mentioned or even implied but Daisy is indeed transmasculine in this, does Daisy know that? well no!, she'll get there guys give her time, okay actually it is implied just a teeny tiny little bit](#), [Established Leo Fitz/Jemma Simmons](#), [Additional Warnings in Author's Note](#), [no beta we die like Skye's self esteem. which is to say it was never a thing in the first place](#)

Language:

[English](#)

Stats:

Published: 2025-08-09 Words: 14,000 Chapters: 1/1

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by puppyboy_butch

Summary

Jemma Simmons (sixteen, still recovering from spinal fusion, published co-author of numerous research papers) has a soulmate.

Leo Fitz (*nearly* seventeen, technically a doctor, currently working on his second PhD, *Jemma*) has known he has a soulmate for as long as he's been able to know things.

Skye (old enough, orphan, general all around good-for-nothing nuisance according to the majority of people who've met her) knows a lot about soulmates. Probably more than the average person does.

That would be because she has two.

OR

In which Fitz, Simmons, and Daisy are soulmates. The problem is this: FitzSimmons have no idea Daisy is part of it.

Notes

This fic is brought to you by the album Older (and Wiser) by Lizzy McAlpine.

I have absolutely no clue where this came from. The idea kinda just. Popped into my head? And here we are a little over a week later. I think I entered a fugue state. Who wrote this.

Brief explanation of how it works, in case my in text world building is confusing: soulmates can communicate through writing on their skin using any sort of writing utensil, and they can feel each others pain and emotions. The pain only transfers if it's particularly intense, and they'll feel it to a lesser extent than the person feeling it firsthand does. For example, if your soulmate

broke their arm, you would just feel an ache in that spot, rather than the pain of a broken arm.

Title is from Triptych by Samia, but specifically the Tiny Desk version. The other song I considered for the title was I Guess by Lizzy McAlpine. Honorary title: I'll tell a lie just to bring you home (I'll tell a lie, but it's understood)

It's like. Okay Triptych is this fic from Daisy's perspective, and I Guess is it from FitzSimmons'. Does that make sense? Idk.

(Seriously guys do NAWT listen to that album while FitzSkimmons thinking. WAAAAAAAAAAAA! ☐)

Trigger warnings!

- Vaguely mentioned child abuse
- Worryingly low self esteem in a child
- Implied sexual assault, including vaguely implied CSA
- Canon typical pain and injuries
- Mentioned throwing up
- Um. Whatever you'd call the canon typical HiveDaisy weirdness, except exacerbated by Hive still being a rotting corpse
- Guys seriously I cannot emphasize enough that he is quite literally actively decomposing. It's nasty
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Daisy's depressed ass LMAO
- Implied self harm and suicidal ideation
- All the moral and ethical implications that come with sharing emotions with someone who does not want to share their emotions? Idk
- Technically* exhibitionism and voyeurism (no full on smut though; I know, I know, I'm sorry 🙄 don't crucify me), and *technically* dubiously consensual at that, in the "they share emotions and stuff happens without really checking in first" sense. It's a grey area I guess?
- Non-explicit sex, and like. Implied masturbation? It's more just suggestive than anything else

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Jemma Simmons (sixteen, still recovering from spinal fusion, published co-author of numerous research papers) has a soulmate.

She always has, it's not a *new* thing, but she didn't always know.

She vaguely remembers scribbles showing up on her skin, ones she didn't put there herself. That, combined with the feelings and emotions and aches and pains she'd feel for no discernible reason, freaked her out enough that she went crying to her parents when she was four years old.

It freaked them out too, once they finally realized she was telling the truth and wasn't just making it up, as little kids are wont to do. Several months (and countless specialists) later, they had their answer.

In the grand scheme of human existence, soulmates are not a particularly common phenomenon. It's exceedingly *rare*, in fact, with only roughly 0.003% of the global population having one. That's approximately 240,000 people, and *she's* one of them. It's a statistical improbability.

There's not a ton of information out there due to the extreme rarity of it all– it's not even widely *known* about, large swaths of people are skeptical of its legitimacy, and even more aren't aware of it at *all*– but there is some.

Soulmates (*anima vinculum*, or soul bond) are people (or peoples, but that's even rarer) that are destined to understand you on an intrinsic level. You're able to communicate through writing on the skin, in addition to feeling each others intense pain and emotions, though to a lesser extent than they themselves can.

It's not always romantic– it's not even always *love*, there have been documented cases of soulmates on opposite sides of a war, who stayed that way until the bitter end– but it is something. A connection. An *understanding*.

Her soulmate's name is Leopold Fitz, though he dislikes Leo and hates Leopold even more. He's her age– almost exactly, even– is into engineering just as much as she's into biochemistry, has one fewer doctorate than she does (*haha*, take *that*, Fitz), is just as lonely and isolated as she is, and (and this is the best part) lives only a couple of hours away from her. They haven't met in person yet, though they plan to very soon, for their next birthday.

She doesn't quite remember how old she was when she fully realized what it meant, all the implications of there being another person in her head, in her heart. Six, maybe, or perhaps seven. Young enough that she's never really known anything different than him.

Fitz has just— *always* been there, and he always will be.

It's the most comforting thing she's ever heard.

Painkillers!

The word appears on the back of her hand right on time. She's bad at keeping to her medication schedule, so he's been setting timers and reminding her.

Taking them now, she sends back, as she takes the pills out of her pill minder and swallows them dry.

Don't dry swallow. Gross.

You have no way of proving I did that.

She laughs when his *doubt-doubt-really-I'mnotstupid* comes through, then winces when her back twinges.

I'm alright, she tells him preemptively. *Laughing hurts.*

I'll be sure to keep my joke to myself for now, then. Get some rest.

Jemma huffs out a soft laugh and sets her pen to the side, and picks her book back up from where she left it lying.

She never tells Fitz this— mostly because she's certain he already knows, and can almost definitely sense it as well— but sometimes (which is to say very often), it feels as though something is missing.

Leo Fitz (*nearly* seventeen, technically a doctor, currently working on his second PhD, *Jemma*) has known he has a soulmate for as long as he's been able to know things.

He didn't know her name for a while, mostly because they were both children who couldn't actually *write* yet, but he's never *not* known that

there was *someone* there, always unerringly in his corner.

She's his best friend, which isn't necessarily a position there's much competition for, on account of her being his *only* friend other than his ma, and she doesn't even really count, technically, on account of being his ma.

Jemma Simmons is his best, first, and only friend. He's pretty sure he's *hers*, too.

It doesn't always turn out that well. It's never guaranteed that you and your soulmate will love each other, or be friends, or even have a positive relationship at all. The only guarantee is an innate, inherent *understanding*.

They've heard plenty of horror stories.

The two of them have been fascinated by the subject for as long as either of them can remember, as soon as they were old enough to really understand what it meant.

And because they're– and not to sound conceited here, but– well, *them*, they are two of the leading researchers in the world on the matter.

Most people who are aware of the phenomenon chalk the existence of soulmates up to *fate*, or something similar, like the *universe*, or the *stars aligning*.

Fitz and Jemma both think that's the biggest load of hogwash they've ever heard.

There's a scientific explanation for everything, even if it hasn't been discovered yet.

They just have to...

Y'know.

Discover it.

Unfortunately, they're not any closer to that than they were when they started, almost a decade ago.

Even so, they've co-authored and published several research papers on the topic of soulmates– in *addition* to the ones they've published on their respective specialties– to the point that they're considered by

many to be somewhat of an authority on the matter.

He'd likely never openly admit this, but he feels rather smug and sanctimonious about it.

Jemma *would* openly admit it.

And has.

Multiple times.

Fitz has known he has a soulmate for as long as he's been able to know things.

Which is to say that he's always been aware that he is one part of a whole, that he is inextricably connected to another person.

Which is to say that for as long as he's been able to know things—which is a fairly long time now— he's known that, just to the left of the part of him that is wholly and entirely *Jemma*, where there should be *something* for him to reach out and hold—

There is *nothing* instead.

(Skye (old enough, orphan, general all around good-for-nothing nuisance according to the majority of people who've met her) no last name (not unless she decides to pick one for herself, and it's childish and *stupid* but she's still holding out hope that someone will—) knows a lot about soulmates. Probably more than the average person does.

That would be because she has two.

Jemma Simmons and Leo Fitz. They're older than her, though she's not sure by how much (the joys of being left on a doorstep as a baby), and they both live in Europe.

They talk about the science of it all a lot. They really like science, and she doesn't quite know what they're talking about all of the time, but she always tries to follow along. She knows they want to further scientific understanding of soulmates, that they've already published papers about it. She's read all of them.

She likes watching them talk.

Nobody else ever really talks to her very often, it's more yelling and scolding and talking *at* her than anything else. And yeah, *technically* they're not talking to her either (she's fairly certain they don't even know she *exists*), but she *is* part of it, kind of. If you squint.

Either way, it's hers, *they're* hers, in a way nothing else is or ever has been.

She never, ever, *ever* tells anyone about them. She already gets way too much of the wrong kinds of attention (not focused enough not pious enough not feminine enough not white enough not whatever-the-other-part-is enough not normal enough not–), and she really doesn't need any more. Contrary to what many may think, *not* all attention is good attention.

She would know, she's currently nursing a bloody nose.

She knows better than to tilt her head back by now, though, after making herself throw up one too many times, so she leans forward and rolls the sleeves of her hoodie up instead, so she can watch the words appear on her arms.

Are you alright?

That's Jemma. Her handwriting is all blocky and neat, while Fitz's is more loopy and fancy. They use different colored pens sometimes, too; Jemma prefers warmer colors, and Fitz leans towards cool ones, but most of the time they both just use plain black.

Which is a shame, really. She likes the bright colors, even (*especially*) when she's the only person who'll ever see them.

(Skye's handwriting– not that they'll ever *know* this, so it doesn't even *matter*, not really, she doesn't know why she's even bringing it up– is messy. Harsh lines, inconsistent sizes, usually a couple of words crossed out and rewritten. It could be neater, probably, but the nuns don't like her using her left hand, so she makes do.)

I'm fine, it's just a bit nippy :)

Ah. They think it's the cold.

That's fine. She'd rather them think it's something innocuous on their end (even though she *knows* how much they both hate being wrong)

than realize that they're in pain because of her total inability to *for once in your goddamn life, shut the fuck up, Mary!*

It's her fault, really.

It's almost always her fault.

That's why they don't know about her. She's spectacularly adept at fucking things up, and this— *them*— is the *one* good thing she's consistently had, without fail, in her entire life.

They have names. They have homes. They have families. They have love and safety and the reassurance that *they* can mess up, and not immediately be thrown to the curb.

She doesn't get that.

Any of it.

All *Skye* has is the name she chose for herself, and a diagnosis of Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and the scars on her back, and her inability to make eye contact or speak like a *normal* person anymore, and spheniscophobia, funnily enough, thank you Sister Lucille, and everything she tries to make sure Jemma and Fitz don't feel, and twenty-*fucking*-nine foster homes under her belt.

Everyone gets rid of her eventually.

She can't lose them, too.)

Their plan to meet up for their shared birthday celebration does not go according to plan.

Rather, they meet in person for the first time at new student orientation, at the SHIELD Sci-Tech academy.

They already know they're both going to be there— it's pretty much impossible to keep secrets from each other, which was rather embarrassing until they got over it— and they both already know what the other looks like.

All this to say, their first meeting happens in an absolute cliché, when

coming back as *panic-fear-cold-cold-cold-cold-cold-won'tstart-won'tstart-whywon'tstart-hungry-hungry-hungry-hungry-FEAR-fear-fear-bargain-resignation-shame-shame-shame-shame-shame-shame-tired-sotired-pleasejustwannabedone.*

When they do think about it, exhausted and delirious and half asleep in their rooms, they both assume it's the stress of their work, and deem it not important enough to bring up.

That happens a lot.

(During their first year at the academy, when she's newly sixteen, Skye runs away for the final time. She goes out the second story window (her bedroom door locks from the outside, so she can't–), in the middle of the night. Total cliché.

She tried to make sure they didn't feel any of– *it*, but she doesn't know how successful she was. She hopes it worked. She doesn't think she'll ever forgive herself if it didn't.

She lets them back in slowly when it's over, when she's out, and promises herself that she'll never let that happen to her, *ever* again.

During their second year at the academy, when she's seventeen, she almost freezes to death in an alley.

The only possessions she has to her name at that point are her threadbare backpack, the clothes on her back, one spare outfit, her baby blanket, and her second ever laptop. She won it in a bet. She found the first one in a dumpster when she was nine, used it 'til it was functionally just a brick.

She tentatively started working with a hacktivist group a few months ago, and has had a couple conversations with some guy in it, named Miles. She's pretty sure he lives near where she is.

He lets her into his apartment when she asks. Lets her use his shower and gives her dry clothes and cooks more food for her than she's had in a *while*.

In exchange.

Right.

Their third year at the academy, when she's eighteen, has a lot of *happy-happy-neurotic-EXCITED-NERVOUS-smug-soTIRED-exhausted-accomplishment-achievement-proud-proud-PROUD!*

Miles makes fun of her, when she won't (can't) stop grinning.

One year after they graduate, when she's nineteen-almost-twenty, she finds out about Centipede.)

The first time they ever meet Skye, they're both flooded with *SURPRISE-shock-stress-fear-notyet-notyet-whynow-WOW-pretty-pretty-pretty.*

When Fitz glances at Jemma out of the corner of his eye, he sees her face rapidly flushing. He can feel his own doing the same.

It makes sense, what the two of them are feeling (and they *are* both feeling this, not just one of them sharing the other person's). Neither of them are particularly good at meeting new people, especially ones that are as unabashedly *cool* as Skye seems to be.

And– okay, yes, Fitz thinks Skye might possibly be the prettiest person he's ever met in his entire life. He knows Jemma agrees.

Only later do they realize that this specific one was coming from *her*, not them.

The nonstop (*three way*, Christ, they feel so *stupid* when they realize) feedback loop of *hurts-terror-regret-sorry-sorry-SORRY*, that they both think is from each other– Fitz for not stopping her from going in, Jemma for not being there in the first place– drowns out any pain they might've felt from her wounds.

And when she wakes up, days later, Jemma is in the room with her, and *very* caught off guard from her sitting bolt upright out of nowhere,

no one will give him any official work yet, not until he does more physical therapy for his hands, and he *really* needs something to distract himself.

He holds his hand out to the side, and Skye passes him the tool that she was fidgeting with. She's been keeping him company as he works, when she's not too busy to.

They don't talk much when they hang out like this. They're both... *different* now, and talking will just inevitably remind them of everything that happened.

His patience for the entire situation is rapidly waning.

Nobody trusts him anymore, not really. They won't let him do any work, and everyone pities him now, and he *knows* there's something they're not telling him.

His fingers tremble, causing the joint he's trying to insert into a socket to miss it entirely. He growls under his breath, and feels Skye glance at him from where she's sitting to his left.

The parts for this project are small, yes, requiring specialized tools, but he's *never* had this much difficulty before, even when he was still just learning. He's never had this much difficulty with *anything* before.

His hands spasm. The components, fragile as they are, bend under the sudden pressure.

He hears something *crack*.

Skye immediately slides off of the table she was sitting on, hands held up placatingly.

"Okay, *Fitz*—" she starts, only for him to abruptly shove all the pieces away from him and stand up. Her mouth snaps shut so fast he can hear her teeth click together.

He whirls away from her and throws the tool at the wall with a shout of pure frustration, before yanking at his curls with trembling hands and kicking his stool over.

Worry-DANGER-confusion-panic-areyouokay-fear-what'sgoingon-smallsmallmakeyourselfsmall floods his overloaded brain, and he instantly deflates, burying his face in his palms; even just the reminder that Jemma is thinking of him is enough to calm him down.

He exhales slowly, feeling his shoulders drop as the feeling of her writing to him manifests on the back of his left hand.

"D'you have a, um– a..." he trails off, opening and closing his hands like he's grasping for something. "You know, a... a writing..."

Several seconds pass by with no response. When he turns back around, he sees Skye standing there with her shoulders hunched and her face pale, her hands buried in the pockets of the jacket she's always wearing.

She starts to take one out, before getting an odd expression on her face and reaching into that pocket with her other hand. She pulls out a pen and hands it to him wordlessly. It's bright purple.

Are you alright? What happened?

Fitz frowns as he holds the pen to his arm so he can write his response. His hand is shaking so badly that there's no way he'll be able to write a single legible word, much less an entire sentence. He turns to Skye again.

"This probably looks bizarre, but Jemma and I can–"

"I know," she interrupts, weird look still on her face.

"You do?"

She smiles shakily, both hands back in her pockets. "Soulmates, right?"

Fitz blinks, surprised.

"Erm– yes, actually. I didn't know you..." He looks back down his arm, only to see a new message from Jemma, sounding considerably more panicked this time. "Are you able to do me a favor? I can't... I can't write."

With that, he holds the pen back out in her direction.

Skye pales even further, until she looks like she's about to pass out right then and there. She presses her lips together and swallows harshly, like she's struggling not to start dry heaving.

"...are you okay?" Fitz asks, pen wavering in the air.

She doesn't say anything, just hesitantly grabs it with her right hand, then gestures to the chairs near them with it. Fitz collapses in the one

closest to him with a relieved sigh.

"*Thank you*," he emphasizes. "She's beside herself with worry right now."

"I know," Skye mutters as she joins him, before clenching her jaw. "...I can imagine."

She uncaps the pen gingerly, looking every bit like she's defusing a bomb instead, then looks at him expectantly.

"Just... tell her I'm fine, that I just got frustrated," he dictates. "You should say it's you, too. She'll want to say hi."

Skye nods once and sets to work. His arm shifts under the weight of her own several times, and she keeps almost pulling her left hand out of the pocket it's still in to stabilize it, but she never actually does.

Hi Simmons! This is Skye :) I'm writign writing for Fitz. He says he's fine, he just got frustat frustrated over a project. Hope you're doing well!

Hello, Skye! That's a relief to hear, I was rather worried. Thank you for helping him. How have you been?

Fitz sits there and watches her as she responds to Jemma without his guidance, as they start a conversation on the limited space his arm provides them.

Her hands aren't shaking.

The rest of her is.

(That night, as she lays flat on her back on her bed, she holds her left forearm above her face and gazes up at it.

Most of the words are already gone, scrubbed away until the skin around them is red and painful. Luckily, erasing the words never seems to affect what's on their bodies, only hers, unless she was the one who wrote them in the first place.

(Ask her how she knows.)

She's started doing it a lot more lately. She's not really in an environment where she can keep getting away with wearing long sleeves all the time anymore, so she's had to get a lot more vigilant about keeping her arms blank of any writing, even though they *are* mostly in the habit of not writing anywhere easily visible.

Most of the words are gone now, in preparation for tomorrow.

Most of them.

She hesitantly reaches her free hand up and holds it right over the ones that are still there, before skimming the tips of her fingers against them as gently as she possibly can, over and over and over again.

Hello, Skye!

Hello, Skye!

Hello, Skye!

Hello, Skye!

Hello, Skye!

She stares at the words reverently as she traces the letters with her fingertips, her eyes wide, her mouth hanging open.

She's never had this before.

She didn't think she ever *would*.

She doesn't *actually* have it, of course, never will, but this is the most she's ever been able to pretend. The closest it's ever gotten to being *real*.

When she leaves her bunk the next morning, she's in a tshirt.

Her arms are bare.)

The grief for Trip is inescapable.

The fear is worse.

The only thing stronger than either of those is the *guilt*.

When it finally, *finally* clicks into place, after years and years of brushing it off and making excuses, it comes not through their third's emotions, but the complete and total *lack* of them.

When, in the middle of the biggest crisis they've faced so far (because while Hydra may have been similarly genocidal, at least they weren't *superpowered*), Fitz feels the connection slam *shut*, in a way it *never* has before.

He jolts his head up, feeling more betrayed than he thinks he's ever felt, which is really saying something. Only— he feels upset, but even more so than he would on his own.

But—

That means—

Confusion-EMPTY-devastation-EMPTY-shock-EMPTY-what'shappening?-EMPTY-Leo?-EMPTY-Leoareyouthere?-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING-NOTHING- NOTHING- NOTHING.

Much to the unending panic and confusion of Mack and Coulson, Fitz doubles over and throws up.

Later, after it's over, as they're all making their way out of the Quinjet and into the hanger attached to the base, Jemma comes rushing over to him. He twists as she collides with him, wrapping his free arm around her.

"That wasn't you?" She whispers into his neck, sounding relieved and surprised and utterly *broken*. "Leo, *that wasn't you?*"

"No," he replies, mouth dry. "No, that wasn't—"

Skye laughs weakly from his other side, where she's braced against his shoulder.

"S'rry," she says, high pitched and reedy, as her head drops forward and she starts to slump against his side. "S'rry, 'm s'rry."

Jemma pulls away from him slightly and turns to Skye, before blanching and hurriedly grabbing her by the biceps.

"What *happened*?" She demands frantically as the two of them lower her to the floor, then motions to someone behind them.

"My m'ma tr'd t'kill me," Skye mumbles, eyes unfocused.

"What?" Jemma asks. "Your mum— *what*?"

There are several people surrounding them now, doctors and agents and Coulson and *Calvin*, even, crying and panicked and handcuffed, all bustling around and transferring Skye onto one gurney and the director onto another.

"S'why I did it," she slurs, staring through them. "Didn' wan' you t'..."

Skye smiles at them, though it looks far closer to a grimace than anything else.

"I'll be back," she says nonsensically, looking the worst they've seen her, pale and haggard and *drained*. "Don' worry. S'rry."

Neither of them have any idea what's she's talking about, and they don't have the mental capacity to even *begin* to try and figure it out, too torn between panic over her and sheer, utter *devastation* at the *nothingness* inside of them.

And as she's wheeled away, they stand there and cry over someone they didn't even know they were missing.

(When her mother reaches out and cradles her face, her first instinct is still, despite everything, to lean into the touch.

Here's what makes it out: "Mom, wha—"

Here's what she means to say: "Mom, what are you doing? Mom, why are you doing this? Mom, let's just leave, all three of us. Mom, can't we just be a family?"

Here's what she's thinking: *Mama, please don't hurt me.*

Because Skye is twenty-one, and she's gone her entire life without a family, but right now she feels seven years old and scared and so *lonely* she thinks it's going to kill her.

And then the pain starts, and—

Oh.

Oh, this is actually going to kill her, isn't it?

Huh.

She's shut them out before. It's easy by now, but she tries not to do it very often. It goes two ways, after all, and she likes feeling them, even though they don't know that she's there.

She always tries to be subtle about it, when she does block them, tries to be gentle. Always does it so slowly that they don't notice the difference at all, or at least she *thinks* they don't notice. She hopes.

There's no time for subtlety now.

She takes hold of the door in her soul and slams it shut, keeps it closed with her body, just as the **AGONY** hits.

The first thing she sees, when she comes to again, when her vision clears, when Cal rolls her onto her side so she doesn't choke on her own vomit, is the blood on her hands.

The second is the tears on her father's face.

The third is her mother's corpse.

Any delusions of *family* she might've once had curl up and die right there.)

The connection does open back up eventually, several days later, when they're both so panicked that they're considering doing something incredibly drastic and entirely unethical.

They're lying in their shared bed, both of them unable to sleep at all, when they feel it.

Fitz exhales shakily when it happens, when the connection hesitantly (so fucking *hesitantly*, like their third is *scared* of how they'll react) cracks back open, and he's hit with a migraine and fatigue and full body aches and veritable *wall* of
sorrysorrlysorrysorrlysorrysorrlysorrysorrlysorry.

"It's okay," he says out loud, even though he knows they won't be able to hear it. "It's— it's okay, you're *okay*."

He's crying at this point, and he knows Jemma is too.

Neither of them have slept much in the past few days, too wrought with fear. They had no idea what was happening with their third (their third, their *third*), if they were even still *alive*.

They're two of the leading researchers on soulmates in the entire world, and they've never heard of anything even *remotely* similar to this, this *nothingness*.

What happened? Fitz asks, right as Jemma writes, *Are you safe?*

Neither of them bother asking if they're okay. The pain they feel in every inch of their bodies is proof to the contrary.

The tears start anew when a wave of all encompassing *grief* hits them, quickly followed by it being cut off and a fresh round of *sorrysorrysorrysorrysorry*.

This is different from the grief he and Jemma have been feeling for months now, the grief he thought was over Trip, but he now suspects is from their third.

This is sharper. This is *new*.

Don't be sorry, Jemma tells them, as Fitz buries his face in her shoulder and *weeps*.

Because oh.

Oh.

This is what's been missing from them this entire time, the mysterious *absence* that's been part of them for over two decades now. They've been here this entire time, and he never even *knew*, not until it's too late to keep them safe.

Where are you? He manages to ask. *Tell us where you are and we'll come.*

We love you, they think, because even though it's not always love, the both of them already **know** that's what this is.

There's a pause in his soul, and he and Jemma both watch as a dot of purple ink appears right on their forearms, like their third has touched a pen to their own.

That's the most they ever hear.

It's a blessing and a curse, when she's on Maveth.

Neither of them like to think about it.

(Two months after Jemma— no, *Simmons*, she doesn't get that privilege, it's not *for* her— is taken from them, there's a knock on Daisy's door.

She can tell it's Fitz from his vibrational pattern. She knew it was coming; she's been watching the shadow of someone standing outside for over five minutes now.

"It's unlocked," she calls out, just loud enough for him to hear. After a moment the door slides open, and Fitz enters into the room.

"Hi," he says quietly. "Can I come in?"

Daisy exhales sharply through her nose.

"You're already in, dude. Just shut the door behind you."

He nods once and steps in further, closing the door behind him and cutting off all of the light.

It's awkward, fumbling your way through an unfamiliar space in the dark. She nearly laughs when she hears him trip and stumble, but it just comes out as a quiet huff.

The bed dips when he sits next to her. They're almost touching, but not quite.

"Jemma is asleep," he informs her, and she nods.

"I know."

"...you do?" He sounds confused. And slightly suspicious.

Oh, fuck.

"Figure you'd still be talking to her if she was awake," Daisy says, in a desperate attempt at course correction. "Everything okay?"

His exhale is long and slow, and she can sense all the tension of the day melt out of him as it happens.

"I'm fine," he murmurs, head in his hands. "I just... I can't be alone tonight."

She doesn't say anything in response to that, just scoots over so there's room next to her at the headboard. He takes it with a sigh of relief.

"Thank you."

"No problem, man," she tells him, drawing her knees up to her chest.

"Did you want to... talk?"

He wordlessly shakes his head in response, and she trills quietly in acknowledgement.

They sit there in silence for several minutes, long enough that she slowly untenses. Eventually she exhales tiredly, and tilts her head back against the headboard behind her.

"Why did you come to me, Fitz?" She asks quietly.

"I can't-" he says, and turns to her. "I can't be alone tonight."

Then he leans in and kisses her.

She lets him do it at first. She just sits there, her shoulders tense, her body rigid as his lips slide against hers. After a moment she relaxes enough that her shoulders drop, and her hands tentatively settle onto his.

It's only when he reaches out and touches her in return that she abruptly jerks away, all the way to the other side of the bed.

"No, this isn't- this isn't *fair*," she says (pleads), before inhaling sharply. "To- to *Simmons*. She's your soulmate, Fitz, your *girlfriend*, what are you-"

"She knows!" He interrupts, and Daisy goes still. "Jemma knows. This isn't a secret."

She stares at him with wide eyes, even though she knows he can't see her. Her heart is pounding (too fast) in her ribcage, with something a bit like *hope*.

"Jemma- Jemma *knows*?" She asks. "*You* know? You both- you both *know*?"

"Yeah," Fitz confirms. He presses his hand to her cheek, but quickly removes it when she goes rigid instead of leaning into it. "We both know."

"And-" she starts. "You don't... *mind*? That it's..."

That it's me, is what she means, but she can't quite bring herself to

actually say it.

Fitz frowns, feeling *confused-curious-whatdoesthatmean*, and he shakes his head.

"...no, neither of us mind?" He says, though it sounds more like a question than a statement. "We're both comfortable enough in our relationship with each other to be open. This was her idea, actually, earlier today. I can show you, if you'd like."

Oh.

Right.

Go to Sk Daisy tonight. It's okay if something happens. That's what it said.

She didn't realize that *that's* what it–

He's not talking about–

Of *course* he isn't, *why* would he be talking about–

She's spent her entire life hiding from them like a fucking *coward*, she
has *no goddamn right* to be–

"Okay," she breathes, and feels more than sees his relief over not having irrevocably damaged his friendship with her.

"Okay?" He asks, shifting closer again. "Because we can– we can just sleep." He exhales shakily. "I just– I really can't be alone right now."

"I'm capable of having casual sex, Fitz," she tells him, and prays that he can't hear the bitterness and exhaustion and *longing* in her voice. "I just didn't know that–" She pauses and swallows harshly. "That Simmons *knew*."

"Oh." He blinks. She can just barely see it. "Yes, Jemma–"

She kisses him this time.

He rears back very slightly in surprise, but quickly catches on and presses forward again. His slight stubble scratches against her face, makes the *thing* in her chest that she doesn't let herself think about swell uncomfortably.

His hands hover in the air for a moment, before settling on her hips.

They're shaking.

Or maybe she is.

He reaches a hand up past her as the other slides underneath the hem of her shirt, out towards her bedside lamp, but she catches it with one of her own, wrapping it gently around his wrist.

"Keep the lights off," she says quietly. "*Please*."

Fitz nods slowly, even as she feels his *confusion-concern-suspicion-worry-longinglonginglonging*.

"...okay," he acquiesces, and moves his hand back down once she lets go of it.

And in her room, where all of the lights are turned off, and both of their faces are wet, and he's shaking, or maybe she is, and he calls her by a name that isn't hers, and they can both feel when their missing piece wakes up, and she bites her tongue so she doesn't say anything at all–

Daisy lets herself pretend.)

They know beyond any shadow of a doubt that they have a third by now, too many aches and pains and emotions that they don't know the source of, plus at least one other confirmed instance of them being shut out, and several more they suspect.

They have absolutely no idea who it is.

Their third has never reached out, never responded to any messages they've written, never even acknowledged any of them, so they both conclude that they aren't interested in pursuing a relationship with them, be it romantic or otherwise.

They still address them occasionally, simple questions, silly jokes, meaningless doodles. Nothing that ever requires an answer, and *definitely* nothing that has any expectations attached.

They're willing to wait, for however long it takes.

Even if they're waiting forever.

Once, just *once*, they wake up to a response, the morning after they write to them for hours, after it felt like their third got thrown through a damn *wall*. They find it at the same time, when they take off their sleep clothes to start getting ready for the day.

It's a field of flowers all across their torsos, right over all the spots where they can still feel the sharp ache of their third's fractured ribs (painful for them, what must be agonizing for their third). It's drawn in painstaking detail, to the point that it looks like it must've taken them hours, maybe even the entire night.

It's only when Gemma meets Fitz's equally wide eyed gaze that she notices the second half of the message, shakily scrawled right over his heart.

Sorry.

They think nothing of it at first, when they feel a sudden rush of *happyhappyhappyhappyhappyhappyhappy* out of nowhere. They just

The happiness isn't all they feel from her.

It's most of it, but eventually, other feelings start to break through as well.

Lightheadedness.

Nausea and revulsion and an acidic burn in her throat and mouth, frequently, and always accompanied by *sorry-sorry-don't mean to-can't help it*.

Pain, in her bones and in her muscles and in her entire *body*, after a certain point.

Burning in her lungs and throat, like she can't stop coughing. Like she can't *breathe*.

Bolts of pleasure.

(They both throw up the first time that one happens. They can only imagine what caused it.)

The *grief-sorry-please just UNDERSTAND* when she attacks Fitz and Mack nearly brings them to their knees.

Awe, once, so intense they both start crying.

The worst ones, though, by *far*, are the brief, fleeting feelings of absolute **terror**.

It never lasts very long, only a second or two at most, but it's *often*, and bad enough to leave them twitching with fear for minutes afterwards. The *guilt-shame-sorry* that always hits them like a brick to the head immediately after doesn't help, either.

They're not much help in the effort to take down Hive, not beyond researching.

The secret is out, too, after they keep appearing to overreact to seemingly nothing. Not that they ever made much of effort to keep it a secret in the first place.

"I thought that was a myth," Yo-Yo says, when they finally gather the team and fill them all in. "Like— a story trope."

Jemma huffs exasperatedly, rolling up her sleeve and presenting her forearm as Fitz pulls out one of his pens.

Not a myth.

Everyone stares at her arm for a second, very obviously bewildered, before quickly recovering.

"So, you can... *feel* each other?" Coulson asks, and they nod. "Is that what's been going on with you two lately? Because we *really* need you both at your A-game right now."

Jemma opens her mouth to reply, only to flinch when she's hit with *FEAR-TERROR-NONONO*, followed immediately by *shame-guilt-sorry-sorry-didn'tmeanto*.

She's still curling into herself with the force of it when she looks back up to see the team looking at her and Fitz with worried expressions. It seems to be hitting him harder than it is her— his shoulders are by his ears, his eyes are squeezed shut, his hand is pressed over his mouth— so she swallows and does her best to explain.

"*Daisy*," she grits, wrapping her arms around her torso. Fitz lets out a soft kean next to her, and she closes her eyes. "She's..."

"Tremors is part of it?" Mack asks, looking vaguely nauseous. "You're feeling everything she is?"

"It's how we found out," Fitz mutters, clutching at his head. "*The-happiness*."

"Can she feel you?" May questions, speaking up for the first time. Jemma shakes her head.

"We don't think so. Her— everything we're feeling from her right now is so much more intense than it normally is. We think Hive might be acting as a one-way amplifier. It could potentially have the opposite effect the other way around, where she can't feel *us* at all."

May leans back and exhales, glancing at Coulson. He drops his face into his hands, seeming to catch on to what she's implying.

"...it's an advantage," he murmurs, before lifting his head back up and addressing them wearily. "Like it or not, if you're right... then we have a leg up on them."

("The scientists," He says one day, as she kneels reverently at His feet.
"They're your soulmates?"

She nods, smiling and pressing her face further into His palm. He
hums in consideration.

"You had the potential, I think, to be his," He tells her. He strokes His
thumb over her bottom lip, and she takes it in between her teeth.
"Grant Ward's."

She can't help the instinctive full body flinch at the name. The tip of
His thumb, decayed as it is, splits off when she jerks away. She
immediately spits it out, gagging at the rotten, sickly-sweet taste of
Him, then presses her forehead against His leg in apology.

That's been happening more and more frequently as of late, where
pieces of Him are so decomposed that they can't stay attached for
long. It's utterly nauseating, but only on an instinctual level. *She*
doesn't mind, it's just her body that does.

She's been breathing through her mouth more often than she hasn't
recently, in a constant effort to not throw up.

Again.

He could find a new vessel, one that isn't actively falling apart– God
knows there's plenty of eager volunteers all around Him– but He
seems to particularly appreciate– *this one*. Says it's another point of
connection for the two of them.

"...real– really?" She asks, still fighting the urge to start retching, as
His other hand starts running through her hair. "I'm not doubting you,
but that seems..."

"I know him," He reminds her. "I know *you*."

She lets that sit with her as she thinks it over. She knows he wasn't...
she's *glad* he wasn't, but it makes a certain amount of sense, doesn't it?
It's not inherently love, just understanding.

And didn't she say that once? That she understood him better than
anyone? Wasn't *she* the one who put words to it, who said the thing no

one else was willing to?

And...

"If I was his soulmate," she starts, every inch of her trembling with... what she'll call *excitement*. His hand remains in her hair, even as she lifts her head up and looks into His sunken eyes. "Alveus, doesn't that make me *yours*, too?")

Daisy doesn't look at either of them when she passes them in the hall, flanked by guards on either side.

She doesn't look at anyone.

Everyone unanimously decides that *Jemma* of all people should be the one to talk to her, to attempt to gather any pertinent information she might have. When she asks if there are no other personnel available, Coulson just gives her a pained look.

Apparently, the collective, organization-wide opinion of their resident Inhuman isn't the highest right now.

"Daisy," Jemma greets from her spot in the containment pod when she reaches the viewing window, before clearing her throat. "How are you feeling?"

The woman in question doesn't move from where she's sitting on the couch, hunched over with her elbows on her knees and her hands in her hair.

"...he's at a missile silo in the Pacific," she mutters, not bothering to lift her head up. "He's got... 's a virus. Bad one."

(*Myfault-myfault-myfault.*)

"We know," Jemma tells her, as gently as she possibly can. "Your—everything was stronger than normal. We could feel what was going on."

Daisy exhales slowly at that, pressing her hands over her face.

"I'm— *sorry*. That you had to feel that. I never wanted you to..."

Jemma doesn't entirely know what response she was expecting. A flinch. A denial. Confusion, maybe. *Anything* other than just—*resignation and apologies.*

"...how long have you known?" She asks, after having to take a deep breath so she doesn't say something she'll regret.

Daisy lifts her head up jerkily, looking every bit like a puppet with its strings cut.

She's still not looking at her.

"My entire life," she rasps, and Jemma has to close her eyes.

"Your entire life," she echoes. "You've known you have soulmates your entire life, and you never..."

Never—*what?*

Never wondered, never reached out, never said anything, never tried to find them?

She doesn't know.

Daisy finally turns her head in Jemma's direction, though her eyes slide right past her and onto the wall behind her, like making eye contact is too much for her right now.

"...Jemma," she says, a strange look on her face. "For my entire life, I've known it was *you.*"

And—

Logically, Jemma already knew that that had to be the case. She and Fitz have used each others full names, they've talked about going to the academy, about working for SHIELD—

There's no way she *wouldn't* have known.

But then *why didn't she say anything?*

Twenty-two years of being part of them, three of knowing them in person, and ***she never said anything.***

I can't do this, Jemma doesn't say, because despite slowly realizing she knows her far less than she thought she did, she still *knows* Daisy, knows how it would sound to her.

She really can't do this. Not now. Not yet.

"I can't– I can't be here right now," she says instead, and tries not to start screaming as she turns around. "I need to take a minute."

Daisy makes a sound in the back of her throat, feeling *resignation-acceptance-vindication-knewit-don'tleaveme-don'tleaveme-don'tleaveme*.

"I'll be back," Jemma swears, then repeats it when she hears a scoff from behind her. "I *will*, and Fitz will be with me, and we are going to have a *very long* conversation."

She presses her hands to her face for a moment, then starts making for the door, though she pauses after a single step.

"...what kept scaring you?" She asks quietly, her back still turned.

Daisy laughs hollowly. It's harsh, and flat, and entirely devoid of humor. It's the worst sound Jemma's ever heard.

It's silent after that, for long enough that she thinks she's not going to get an answer, so she starts walking towards the door again. And right when she reaches it, just as she touches the control panel–

"...he had Ward's face."

And then they feel *craving-begging-pleading-desperation-relief-nonono-pleasepleaseplease-bitterness-anger-terror-resignation*.

And then they're on the Zephyr.

And then Daisy comes barreling into the control room.

And then the world is saved.

And then she's *gone*.

Jemma writes to Daisy every day that she's away.

That feels broken.

You're lightheaded. Are you eating?

Please get some sleep. You're going to run out of steam eventually.

How much blood have you lost?

You need to go to a hospital.

There's a safe house near where I think you are. There's supplies there.

Did you just get stabbed?

Let us help.

Please come home.

We love you.

She never hears anything in return, aside from an occasional dull ache right after she writes something, which she thinks might be Daisy intentionally pressing on a bruise, hard enough for them to feel it.

Fitz growls under his breath. "She should. She *will*. She owes us an explanation, at the very least."

"When has she ever responded before?"

"She did that one time, with the field of..." he trails off, before abruptly stopping in his tracks and pressing the heels of his palms into his eyes. "Field of *daisies*, *God*, we're stupid."

"Fitz," Jemma says, feeling distraught at the reminder. "Fitz, we didn't even know she was hurt then. She knew the entire time, and we never even *suspected* anything. How *long* has she been..."

"I don't know," he responds, staring at the wall. "I don't want to know."

"Do you remember all the times it would get worse?" She asks him. "The emptiness? Like those months in our first year at the academy?"

"Yeah," Fitz croaks, collapsing onto the foot of the bed. "Yeah, I remember."

"Do you think..." Jemma hedges. "Was... was that her— *blocking us out*?"

He exhales slowly, his shoulders slumping.

"...I think so, yeah," he says, running a hand through his hair. "I didn't even know it was *possible*."

"She would've been, what— fifteen? Sixteen?"

Fitz makes a wounded noise from where he's sitting with his back towards her, before dropping his head into his hands and sighing quietly.

She can feel his devastation, as acutely as if it were her own.

"...she ran away when she was sixteen," he whispers into the night air. "She told me that once. It was her last foster home."

Fitz doesn't stay angry for long. It's hard to stay angry at someone when you can feel everything they're feeling.

When you can feel how angry they are at *themselves*.

Jemma still writes every day. He joins her, sometimes, but only sometimes.

What would he even say to her?

I forgive you for almost killing me.

I forgive you for promising to kill me if you see me again.

I think I forgive you for leaving.

I don't forgive you for not saying anything.

That's what he's hung up on the most: that she never said anything. The only reason they even found out was because she was almost killed, and then she was brainwashed.

If she hadn't shut them out, they never would've found out they had a third. If she hadn't been swayed, they never would've found out their third was *her*.

Was she *ever* going to tell them?

Fitz sets his wrench down on his workbench and cradles his head in his hands, sighing tiredly.

"Everything okay over there, Turbo?" Mack asks, not looking away from the engine he's working on. Fitz nods absentmindedly, then realizes he can't see it.

"...d'you think she ever would've told us?"

Mack looks up at that, eyebrows raised. After a second he straightens up and crosses his arms, sucking in a breath through his teeth.

"Honestly? Probably not."

Fitz scoffs and turns away. He already knew that, of course, or suspected it, at least, but hearing it from an outside perspective stings.

"Don't be like that," Mack says. "It almost definitely had nothing to do with you. You know how she is, man."

"Right," Fitz mutters. "How she is. She just made no effort to reach out for two decades because of *how she is*."

Mack shakes his head and walks over to join him at his workbench.

"That's not what I meant, and you know it."

"Then what did you mean?" Fitz asks, feeling incredibly frustrated with everyone's inability to just *say what they mean*. "What did you mean? Can people actually *say* that for once, instead of just *expecting me to know*?"

"Fitz, this is *Daisy* we're talking about," the other man reminds him. "That girl *hates* people knowing things about her. I'm still unsure if she was joking about those nuns or not. I'm not even one hundred percent confident how old she is."

"What's your point?"

"My *point*, Turbo, is that this is someone who— for whatever reason— *despises* it when people know how she's feeling, or what she's doing, or anything she deems *too personal*, or *anything* about her past beyond five years ago, really." He raises his eyebrows. "And there are two people with essentially *front row seats* to *everything* she doesn't want anyone knowing about. I wouldn't talk about it, either."

"...really?"

"No, of course not. But I understand it."

He ends the conversation there and goes back to the car he's working on, but not before giving Fitz a pointed look.

He exhales slowly, pinching the bridge of his nose in between his fingers.

It's not like he didn't already know all of that. He even knows *why* she's like that, at least to an extent.

They've talked about it before, the two of them. Or at least he's talked about it, and she's alluded to it. And even if they hadn't discussed it, he'd probably still know. Like recognizes like, or something to that effect.

Although maybe that's more for when you have the same interests, and not for whether or not you were both hit as kids.

She knows more about what his father did to him than anyone, save for his ma, and even then there are things his ma doesn't know that

she does. She knows more than Jemma, more than the team, certainly more than any doctors or therapists he's been to.

But even through it all– the late night talks, the commiserating looks, the supportive touches– he could tell that she always held herself back from him, that she never quite let herself open up in the same way he would.

And that–

It *stings*. Especially considering what he knows now.

...did she not trust him to be there for her?

He would've been. No matter what. He would've done anything to prove it to her as well.

But she never even gave him the *chance* to.

He doesn't know if he can forgive her for it.

"She's going to feel this, you know," Jemma murmurs later that evening, when they're slipping their clothing off. "She probably always has."

"Good," Fitz replies, barely even bothering to pull away from her as he unhooks her bra. "I want her to."

She sighs into his mouth at the two-fold sensations of pleasure when they finally start touching each other. *That's not fair to her*, she almost tells him, but she bites it back.

It isn't fair. It's selfish, and shortsighted, and petty, and *cruel*, especially when they both know so intimately just how poorly she's doing right now.

It's not right.

But Jemma wants it too.

"Tell me about her?" She requests, and he nods.

And as they lie there afterwards, sweaty and naked and spent, and pressure starts to build in their lower stomachs, and they feel a quiet wave of *regret-shame-pleasure-guilt-feelsgood-shame-goodforyou-loveyou-loveyou-shame-sorrysorrysorrysorrysorry* wash over them—

They can hazard a guess as to what she's thinking.

("Are you ever going to respond to them?" Yo-Yo asks her once, one of the times they meet up.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Daisy says, her voice flat, but Yo-Yo just raises her eyebrows.

"They're worried about you," she tells her, ignoring her uncharacteristically poor attempt at deflection. "We all are, *Terremoto*."

Daisy sets her jaw and looks away as she takes the pill bottle from Yo-Yo's outstretched hand.

"...yeah, well," she mutters, feeling far too tired for someone so young. Then again, when has she *ever* been allowed to act her age? "You shouldn't be.")

Approximately fifteen minutes before she has a viewing for an apartment, Jemma feels a sharp, burning pain in her right shoulder.

She stops in the middle of the sidewalk and grabs onto it. It garners more than a few dirty looks from people who have to swerve around her, but she doesn't care.

That's the most she does, aside from making a note to herself to reach out later. There's nothing else she *can* do. She checks in with Fitz when he calls, just to ensure that it wasn't him (the odds are slim, but not nil), but he's as in the dark as she is.

It seems that's all either of them are, these days.

She still goes to the viewing, even as she feels *pain-pain-burning-sorry* permeate throughout her entire upper body. There's truly nothing she can do, at least not right now, and it really *is* the perfect apartment for them.

And then Daisy comes crashing through the doorway, leaving streaks of blood on the wall she's slumped against.

Well.

She probably should've expected something along those lines. Murphy's Law and all that.

Daisy's skin— pale and bruised and covered in blood (both fresh and... *not*) of unknown origin— is flushed and hot underneath her hands when she pulls her to her feet, even taking her higher than human average body temperature into account.

"I take it the email was from you, then?" Jemma asks as she helps Daisy over to the center of the room, before forcing her into a sitting position and pulling out her medkit.

"It worked, didn't it?" The other woman rasps, flinching when Jemma starts examining the injury on her back.

It's a GSW, that much is clear, though there's no exit wound on the other side, and the entry wound is jagged and torn, even more so than from just being shot.

"Did you take the bullet out *yourself*?"

Daisy tenses, and Jemma can feel her *shame-embarrassment-notabigdeal*.

"Who else would have done it?" She mutters, as Jemma watches the tips of her ears flush.

"Oh, I don't know— a doctor?"

"Aw, come on, Simmons," the Inhuman laughs hollowly. "You know you're the only one for me."

It's meant to be a joke, but her voice is far too flat, her body far too tense for it to come across as anything other than devastatingly sincere.

"I can think of one other person," Jemma says quietly.

Daisy falls silent, before ducking her head and pressing the heels of her palms into her eyes. Her breath shudders when she inhales.

They sit there in silence for the rest of the time it takes Jemma to patch her up.

She has questions, but she doesn't bother asking them, not when she can infer the answers based on everything she's felt over the entire time Daisy has been gone.

"You haven't been blocking us out," she continues, voice soft, because it's been nagging at her for months now. "You used to so often, and yet you haven't done it this whole time. Why?"

She doesn't know what she's expecting the answer to be.

I haven't had the energy to, seems the most likely, though she's sincerely hoping that it's something more along the lines of, *I want to let you in. I always have. Please help me carry all of this weight. I'm so tired of holding up the sky by myself.*

Daisy goes perfectly still underneath her, even as Jemma can feel the sting of the needle pulling through her torn flesh.

"...I *tried*," she whispers, and Jemma feels all of her *shame-reluctance-selfhatred-guilt-loveyou-shame-sorrysorrysorry*. "I don't... I don't think I *can* anymore. Not like I used to."

And if that doesn't send her mind *reeling* over the implications.

She resolves to come back to it later. She doesn't have the time right now.

"Why did you contact me?" She asks. "It can't have been to get patched up."

Daisy exhales tiredly and shakes her head, before reaching into her pocket and pulling out a bloodstained piece of paper.

Later, as she's packing up her supplies in preparation for the *crime* they're about to commit, she catches Daisy staring down at her less injured arm out of the corner of her eye. When she looks down at her own, she sees that there's a message from Fitz.

Everything alright? That feels bad.

"You should respond to him."

Daisy jolts and looks up at her, before swallowing and shaking her head.

"He's probably talking to you," she mumbles, looking back down at her arm.

She strokes her thumb over the letters reverently, gazing down at them like they're something precious, and Jemma feels her heart break.

"You can still respond to him," she says, slowly approaching her and gently touching her bicep. "You're part of this too, you know."

Daisy scoffs quietly, not looking away from her arm.

"You *are*, Daisy. You wouldn't have that message on your arm if you weren't."

She raises her head up then, staring blankly at nothing in particular.

"...y'know—" she starts, before thinning her lips. "Alv— *Hive*— he— he said that I was..."

She trails off after that, her eyes distant and unfocused enough that Jemma can tell she's somewhere else entirely right now. After a moment she seems to snap out of it, shaking her head with a grimace.

Jemma pulls a pen out of her pocket, and wordlessly offers it in her direction.

Daisy's hand, bruised all over and covered in blood and trembling violently, hesitantly reaches out to take it.

Despite everything they talked about and planned while she was gone, they don't immediately sit down and have an in depth conversation as soon as she's back. It's only after they've dealt with Eli Morrow and the Darkhold that they even have *time* to.

Ironically enough, *Daisy* is the one who initiates it.

"We should probably talk," she says to them, once everyone has started to split off from their latest post-almost-apocalypse team

celebration.

They agree to meet in their bunk after she changes, because they need a private space, and they haven't moved into the apartment yet, and she doesn't like people in hers.

Fitz exhales tiredly when the bedroom door slides shut behind him and Jemma, making his way over to the foot of the bed and collapsing onto it. She takes a seat next to him, and he leans over until his head is in her lap.

"What are you thinking?" She asks him, her hands starting to run through his curls. He shrugs.

"You know what I'm thinking," he replies, and she hums.

"Tell me anyway."

Fitz sighs, pressing his hands over his eyes until he starts to see patterns behind his eyelids.

"...do you think she'll actually show up?"

Jemma's hands pause in his hair, and he takes the cue to sit back up. She twines her fingers through his.

"I think so," she says. "I think... I think she's tired of running."

He nods, leaning against her shoulder, and they sit like that in silence.

Eventually– it might've been two minutes, or it might've been twenty, for all he knows– there's a knock at the door.

They answer it together, and open it to see Daisy standing in the doorway, clad in a hoodie and sweatpants, with her hair pulled back and her face free of makeup.

"Can I come in?" She asks quietly, her arms folded across her chest. They stand to the side, and she steps in past them.

She stands in the middle of the room as they retake their seats on the bed, looking anywhere but at them.

"We should probably talk," she repeats, then makes absolutely no effort to do so.

"Do you want to sit?" Fitz asks her, and she nods and collapses into

their armchair.

"Before anything else," Jemma cuts in. "Daisy, do you want painkillers?"

Daisy opens her mouth to respond, but closes it again before she says anything.

"...doesn't really make sense to lie, does it," she mutters, before running a hand down her face and nodding once. "Yeah, sure."

Fitz watches her as Jemma stands to go and collect whatever medication she has in here.

She's leaning forward in the chair, her shoulders hunched inward, her elbows resting on her knees, her hands clasped together in front of her.

She looks tired.

She *feels* painfully exhausted.

"When was the last time you slept?" He asks quietly, and her eyes dart up to meet his.

She searches his face for a moment, before looking away and shrugging noncommittally.

It's answer enough.

"Acetaminophen," Jemma says as she returns from— *wherever* she was, and hands a pill bottle over to Daisy. "It's extra strength. Take two."

She takes it and— after a brief struggle with the child-proof cap— does just that.

Fitz grimaces when she swallows the pills dry, and Jemma looks over at him with the hint of an amused smile.

"Looks like you're outnumbered," she whispers in his direction.

"Don't even start with me right now," he hisses back. "You're both disgusting."

Daisy clears her throat then, and they both turn back to her. She's still hunched over, and not looking at either of them.

"What do you want to know?" She asks, fidgeting with the pill bottle, and Fitz flounders.

He was *not* expecting *her* to be the one to initiate all of this. Even earlier, when she brought up them having a conversation, he thought they'd have to be the ones leading it.

"Um," he says.

"When did you first realize?" Jemma cuts in, glancing at him out of the corner of her eye.

Daisy finally leans back against the chair at that, and blows out a slow breath.

"When I first learned to read, I guess," she tells them. "But even then, I spent a lot of time at the library before I finally figured out what it meant."

"So, what—" Fitz starts, doing the math in his head. "Seventeen, eighteen years?"

"Closer to nineteen, I think," Daisy says, screwing and unscrewing the cap on the bottle over and over again.

"And... *no one* ever knew? You never told anyone?"

She shakes her head, muttering something under her breath that sounds suspiciously like *attention seeking*. He doesn't ask.

"Can I ask how you're able to block us out?" Jemma continues, and Daisy hums.

"It's like..." she begins, before frowning in consideration. "It's like a steel *door* in my soul. I would just— picture shutting and locking it, and then you'd be gone."

"*We'd* be gone?"

She nods.

"It goes two ways. That's why I didn't do it that often. I liked— I *like* feeling you."

She sighs and leans forward, resting her elbows on her knees.

"But... Lash— *did something* to me when he—" She pauses momentarily,

then shakes her head. "I don't know if that's actually what did it, but now it's more like an empty doorway, or a door made of plywood. I can— *mute* it, but I can't really stop anything anymore."

"...you like feeling us," Fitz echoes, and she exhales and nods slowly. "So why did you do it?" He asks. "Why didn't you ever tell us? Why block us out at *all*?"

Daisy looks at them— *really* looks at them— for the first time in the entire conversation.

"My childhood—" she starts, before pausing and pressing her lips together. "I know everyone probably already knows this, but it wasn't—it *really* wasn't great. And I didn't— I didn't want you to feel it. *Any* of it."

She exhales shakily and curls her shoulders inward, pressing a hand to the back of her neck.

"I think... I think after a certain point I just got used to it. I didn't have many good things in my life besides you, and I was so— *sure* that if you knew about me, something would happen. Something always did. Something always *does*."

Fitz draws in a deep breath when she finishes, leaning forward on the bed and dragging a hand down his face.

That's—

A *lot*.

He already knew something like that must've been the case, just based on what he already knows, and what he little he *has* felt from her over the years, but that doesn't make it any less of a slap in the face.

"Did you ever consider that maybe we would've *wanted* to feel it?" He asks, and she turns her head in his direction ever so slightly. "That we would've *wanted* to *know* that you were there?"

Daisy laughs sardonically, shaking her head.

"You wouldn't have. *Trust me*."

Fitz stands up and approaches where she's sitting, stopping a few paces away.

"That's not your decision to make."

Jemma makes a quiet noise of warning from behind him, but he pays it no mind, just keeps his attention on the Inhuman in front of him.

"That's not fair," Daisy says tersely. "You wouldn't have—"

"Oh, *I'm* not being fair?" Fitz interrupts. Her shoulders tense up, and he can feel all of her *panic-anger-reluctance-hurt*.

She looks up at him slowly. He sets his jaw and stares right back.

"I didn't want you feeling that," she grits, and he scoffs.

"Why? We would've been there for you. We would've *helped*."

It's her turn to scoff. He can hear Jemma stand up from the bed behind him.

"Do you not believe that?" She asks, coming to stand next to him. "That we would've helped?"

Daisy shakes her head.

"No, that's not—"

"Then why?" Fitz cuts in. "*Why* did you do it?"

All three of them are steadily and progressively getting worked up over this, made even worse by them feeling each other's frustration.

"I just *did*, okay? Why are you so insistent on there being a reason?"

She's standing by now as well. Fitz can feel his hands beginning to tremble.

"*Damn it*, Daisy, you *don't* get to just— cut yourself out of the equation *entirely*, without even letting us know you're a part of it!"

They're standing toe-to-toe at this point, both their faces flushed with emotion. She's standing up straight in a way she almost never does, and it means he has to look *up*, slightly, to make eye contact.

Her face pales for a moment when he yells, before something in her eyes shuts closed, and she takes a step away from him.

"Okay, this isn't— this isn't working," she mutters, squeezing her eyes shut. "This was a mistake."

She moves to step past him and make for the door, but Fitz grabs her by the arm, though she quickly wrenches it away.

"No, you don't get to leave," he says. "For the love of *God*, Daisy, just *talk* to us!"

He shares a panicked look with Jemma when he feels her attempt to block them out again, but it stops almost immediately.

"*Goddammit!*" Daisy growls in sheer frustration, pressing the heels of her palms against her forehead. "*I don't want you feeling this.*"

"Why, Daisy?" Jemma pleads, pressing her hand to Fitz's back. "*Please*, just let us—"

"*Because you won't want me anymore!*"

She whirls around to face them again as she shouts it. Her face is panicked as it leaves her mouth, like she hadn't meant to say the words at all.

The three of them stand there in silence for several tense moments, before she completely deflates.

"You won't— you won't *want* me anymore," she repeats shakily, like she's just made some sort of confession.

And Fitz can tell, from the *lonely-lonely-scared-young-small-yearning-comeback-pleasecomeback-pleaseletmestay-pleasewantme-pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease* that he can feel with **every fiber of his being**, that they have finally, finally, *finally* gotten to the crux of the issue.

Daisy stares at them with wide eyes, before she brings a hand up and presses it over her face.

He doesn't know how to fix this.

He looks over at Jemma helplessly, only to see her looking straight ahead with unshed tears in her eyes. After a moment she steps forward hesitantly.

"Daisy," she says, then takes another step in her direction. She stops right in front of her, and takes her by the hand. "Come sit down."

Daisy lets herself be led to the foot of the bed without complaint, where she gingerly takes a seat.

Jemma sits down right next to her, and, after a moment of hesitation, Fitz takes the other side.

"...we want you," he says eventually, after several minutes of silence. "You know that, right? We always have."

She tilts her head in his direction slightly to show that she's listening, so he takes a deep breath and continues.

"I've known I have a soulmate my entire life," he tells her, and slowly threads his fingers through hers. "Jemma has always been part of me, but..."

He pauses and exhales slowly, turning to make eye contact with her.

"For as long as I can remember, something has been missing from me. I never knew what, but something was missing. I had myself, and I had Jemma, but there was always this part of me that was just... *empty*."

He laughs quietly.

"Y'know, when you shut us out that time, and we realized that you were there, one of the first things we both felt was *relief*. Because after *years* of missing something, we *finally* knew what it was."

"Daisy," Jemma adds gently, reaching out and taking her other hand. "Love, it's like I said at the apartment: *you're part of this too*. You always have been, even when we didn't know it."

Their third swallows harshly, staring down at her lap.

"...something will happen," she murmurs, voice unexpectedly bitter, and Fitz laughs in agreement.

"Something always does," Jemma echoes softly. "So why not let it happen to us together?"

(The first time they see her without any clothes on– which is to say the first time they're able to see the nearly full extent of everything she made sure they missed– they both end up in tears.

Okay, that's a slight exaggeration. But it is a close thing.

Daisy twitches when Jemma reaches down and starts tracing the tips of her fingers over the bullet scars on her abdomen. They're already ridiculously sensitive on their own, when she's *not* essentially wrung dry, and low enough on her stomach that her breathing stutters in her chest.

"Oh, holy *shit*," she gasps, embarrassingly high pitched and mortifyingly pathetic, and lifts her hips up so she can press herself further into Jemma's touch. Despite that, neither of them get all sappy and smiley, like they normally do when she reacts instinctively like that.

(She always expects them to laugh at her when she does stuff like that, but they never do. It's stupid, kinda, but that's what she's used to. She thought she was into it for a long time, but it turns out she much prefers when her sexual partners *aren't* mean to her. Who would've guessed, right?)

(...Christ.)

(Andrew, if you can hear her from the afterlife—)

But instead of smiling, or laughing, or kissing her, or doing anything she expects them to, they both keep their eyes on the scar tissue on her stomach, their lips turned down at the corners.

"What's up?"

"Did you block us out for that?" Fitz asks, bringing his hand down to the scars and pressing his fingers to them as well.

Daisy drops her head back onto the pillow beneath her and exhales shakily.

"N-no, that's—" she says, before taking a deep breath. "No, I didn't. Did you not feel it?"

She feels more than sees them both frown.

"No," he murmurs, and presses his face into her shoulder.

"I felt apologetic," Jemma speaks up from her other side. "And guilty. And *scared*. But I think that was Fitz."

The man in question raises his head back up from where it's laying,

his eyebrows furrowed.

"I thought that was *you*," he says, before his eyes flick to Daisy. She can feel Jemma watching her, too.

"Uh," Daisy says, like an idiot. "Yeah, that– *might've* been me? Maybe. Potentially." She winces. "...probably."

"...we didn't feel any pain," Fitz says quietly, with a weird expression on his face.

"To be fair, I didn't really either? I think I was in shock, and then by the time the shock wore off I was– y'know..."

She waves a hand nonchalantly, but that seems to just make everything worse, because Fitz and Jemma's faces both just fall even further.

"Which ones *did* you block us out for?" Fitz asks, his voice strained, and Daisy laughs uncomfortably.

"Um– it's probably closer to which ones I *didn't*."

The bullet wounds were because she didn't have time, but there were several others she didn't shut them out for as well, bloody noses and black eyes and broken digits. Ones that would present themselves as minor enough to them that she knew she could count on them brushing the pain off as a fluke.

There's no way in hell she's going to say that, though.

"I'm so sorry we weren't there for you," Jemma tells her tearfully, sliding her hand further down, until it's pressed completely over the bullet scars.

"*That's*– that's okay," Daisy replies, placing her own hand over her mouth and trying very valiantly to not start grinding against Jemma's palm.

She thinks she'd actually die of mortification. God.

"You're– you're here now," she continues, feeling like she's about to blow up and take everyone with her. "And it's not like– oh, my *God*– like I made it easy for you."

Both of them open their mouths at that, no doubt about to reassure her of her (mostly) innocence in all of it, and–

She'd love to continue this conversation, really, she *would*, but neither of them have seemed to notice the way her breathing has sped up, or how she can't keep her eyes open for long, or the tension that's building in her– and subsequently *theirs*, too– stomach, or–

"*Okay! Wait*, wait, wait–" she pants. She shoves at their hands until they move them, then throws her head back and whines when the stimulation is gone. "Holy *fuck*, *wait*. I'm gonna come again if you keep touching them."

They both go still against her.

She rests her head back against the pillows underneath her, and takes a deep breath.

"...so, your scars are sensitive?" Fitz asks eventually, and she huffs out a relieved laugh.

She can tell they both want to keep talking about this, about her scars and her pain and all the times she didn't let them be there for her.

But she also knows that they can very much feel all of her *run-run-hide-hide-nausea-don'twanttotalk-nonononono*.

They've– for the most part, at least– been letting her set the pace for all of this. God, she loves them.

"Just those ones. I think it might have something to do with the GH.325, it shot my sensitivity through the roof, and goddammit, I really shouldn't have told you that, should I?"

The grins on their faces, and the glint in their eyes, and the *surprise-thinking-idea-excitedexcitedexcited* that washes over her are answer enough.)

Bonus:

Daisy chirps quietly when they drape themselves over her back where she's typing away at her laptop, three months afterwards.

"Hi," she greets, not looking away from the code rapidly scrolling past.

"Daisy," Fitz starts, kissing her on the temple.

"*Baby*," Jemma says, going for the double whammy as she rests her chin on her shoulder.

Daisy's fingers go still on the keyboard, and she sighs quietly.

"What do you want?"

"Want?" Fitz sputters, double embarrassment coursing through all three of them.

"Why would you assume we want something?" Jemma adds. "We've never— we don't want anything!"

"I've never wanted anything a day in my life."

Daisy pulls away and twists in her chair, staring at him incredulously. Jemma elbows him in the side.

"I think that was quite possibly the most suspicious way you could've gone about that," Daisy tells them. "I'm kinda disappointed in you guys."

Both of them deflate.

"How could you tell?"

"You always get overly sappy when you want something," she says, turning back to her screen. "And I can literally feel everything you do. Not great for keeping secrets."

Daisy laughs when they groan in defeat, dropping their heads onto her shoulders.

"Yeah, yeah, whatever," she mumbles distractedly, then squints at her computer. "C'mon, don't make me beg."

She pauses again, before a smile starts to grow on her face.

"Although, you *do* like wh—"

She gets cut off when Jemma slaps a hand over her mouth.

"*Do not* finish that sentence," she hisses, face red. "We are at *work*. HR has already emailed me *twice*."

She can feel Daisy's sharp teeth scrape against her palm as she grins. She quickly removes her hand and clears her throat.

"So, what *do* you want?" Daisy asks again, and Fitz and Jemma glance at each other briefly.

"Okay, we knows it might sound weird—" he starts.

"And *please* feel free to turn us down—" she continues.

"But we've been thinking about it for a while now, and—"

They finish in unison, their hands clasped in front of them pleadingly.

"*Can we write a research paper on you?*"

End Notes

ETA 5/25/2026: I feel the need to clarify that the flowers Daisy drew were not, in fact, daisies. FitzSimmons are just trying to retroactively find any hints she might've left, when in reality there simply weren't any. And also they're bad at IDing flowers LMAO

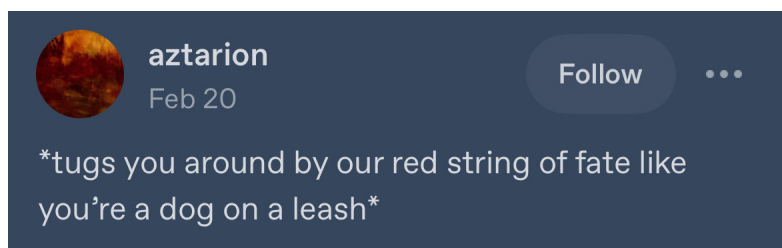
Take a shot every time I use the words "sorry" or "shame."

(Please don't actually do that. I'm pretty sure you'd get alcohol poisoning.)

Lincoln and Daisy were never romantic in this AU, just really good friends, because (while he didn't know about the whole soulmate part) he could tell she was very obviously in love with FitzSimmons. How he was the only person to ever pick up on it, I do not know.

The Framework doesn't happen either, because Simmons and Daisy are in Fitz's head to tell him what a colossally stupid idea both it *and* the way he's going about LMDs are.

Anyways they're literally this post (except they have no idea they're even doing it):



I have an absolutely MASSIVE s2 AU I'm working on (we're talking *novel length* here), but I'm only about halfway done with that one, *and* I'm about to start going to school to become a nurse, so who knows when it'll be done LMAO

Follow me on tumblr @puppyboy--butch for writing updates!

(Also I can't believe I figured out a way to sneak my evil fucked up HiveDaisy agenda in here. Keep it in your pants guys. No seriously please keep it in your pants. I'm scared it will fall off if you don't.)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!